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JAN 20 2004

Department of Water Resources

January 15, 2004

Mr. Karl Dreher, Director
Idaho Department of Water Resources
1301 N. Orchard St.
Boise, ID 83706

Re: Palouse Basin Groundwater Management Area

Dear Mr. Dreher:

On behalf of the Moscow Chamber of Commerce, I again wanted to thank you for your agency's continuing interest in the Palouse Basin aquifers. We are pleased the Idaho Department of Water Resources has scheduled a public meeting on February 2nd here in Moscow to provide further opportunity for public comment and information about this important resource issue.

As a local Moscow business organization of over 500 members, the Chamber is very concerned about the designation and management of our groundwater resources, both now and in the future. The Chamber has a strong interest in all actions, whether state or local, related to possible Groundwater Management Area designation or other possible management directives impacting Moscow.

We fully support the City of Moscow's recommendations in their January 5th letter to your agency. As stated in their letter, local groundwater management efforts have in fact begun to yield positive results. The City, along with organizations like the Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee (PBAC), are working locally to achieve optimal management goals as set forth in PBAC's 1992 *Groundwater Management Plan*. While the Chamber acknowledges more should be done, these local conservation efforts are beginning to make a difference. Further, the City's proposal to create a local water advisory group will provide better opportunities for a more diverse representation of water conservation advocacy groups, business interests, as well as our local elected officials and university interests.

In addition, the continued involvement and participation by other water interests in the State of Washington will be essential to a successful, long-term management solution. Watershed planning efforts are already well underway in the Palouse River watershed through Washington's WRIA 34 process. The intent of these efforts is to develop water management plans with input from local stakeholders who often have the greatest knowledge of the resources. It will be imperative these collaborative planning efforts continue to move forward with Idaho's full support and cooperation.

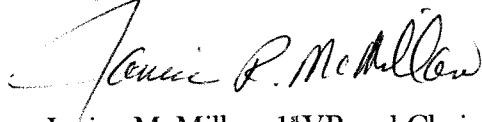
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The Chamber Means Business!

Therefore, we respectfully request you consider continuation of local groundwater management by the City of Moscow among other existing water users. We believe, while much has already been accomplished, even more will be done in the future toward both conservation and stabilization of our aquifers. Through all of this, the Idaho Department of Water Resources will need to continue providing scientific expertise, professional management, and the necessary financial resources as we all work toward managing and protecting our State's valuable water resources.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Janice P. McMillan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Janice" being more prominent than the last name "McMillan".

Janice McMillan, 1st VP and Chair
Community Development Committee

Cc: City of Moscow
Latah County
University of Idaho
Latah Economic Development Council
Palouse Water Conservation Network
Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee
Representative Shirley Ringo
Representative Tom Trail
Senator Gary Schroeder

JM/pjk